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# NORTH CAROLINA CIVIL RIGHTS LAW REVIEW

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Volume 1 | Issue 1

Article 1

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April 2022

## Front Matter

North Carolina Civil Rights Law Review

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### Recommended Citation

North Carolina Civil Rights Law Review, *Front Matter*, 1 N.C. CVL. RTS. L. REV. (2021).

Available at: <https://scholarship.law.unc.edu/nccvlrts/vol1/iss1/1>

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# NORTH CAROLINA CIVIL RIGHTS LAW REVIEW

VOLUME 1

SPRING 2021

ISSUE 1

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The Board and Staff of the North Carolina Civil Rights Law Review  
recognize and thank the visionary students  
who first imagined and advocated for this journal:

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We also thank the following advisors for their  
guidance, support, and enthusiasm:

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Cite as: N.C. CVL. RTS. L. REV.

The views expressed in signed contributions to the *North Carolina Civil Rights Law Review*  
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The *Review* invites submission of unsolicited manuscripts via email and Scholastica.

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## EDITORS' FORWARD

We could not publish this inaugural issue of the *North Carolina Civil Rights Law Review* without first sharing some prefatory remarks. It is not every day that we launch a new venture. And while we cannot predict precisely this journal's future course, there seems no more appropriate time or place to reflect on this publication's origins and vision.

This journal was conceived by students at the University of North Carolina School of Law who recognize that civil rights form the core of the American political and legal experiment. We also recognize that the law is an imperfect instrument for its lofty aims. Too often, rather than preserve our individual and collective freedom, dignity, and opportunity, the law is instead bent toward stagnation, the maximization of commercial profit, and even outright violence and harm. It calcifies as often as it liberates. It regularly replicates the mistakes of our past, nodding toward history not to learn its lessons but to justify the status quo. We believe the law must be continuously examined, critiqued, prodded, and reassessed to ensure that it operates for good, for ourselves and for our communities.

If these themes are national—even universal—in scope, they are also intimate and local. The University of North Carolina has itself wavered between progress and retrogression, between service to the public and the raw pursuit of power and private gain. This is the oldest public university in the country. Yet its leaders have frequently failed to honor the civic nature of the school's mission or reckon honestly with its unsavory past. Recent debates over funding and advocacy training programs at the law school are merely part of a larger trend. The people of this state are diverse in their experiences, their dreams, and their needs. We believe that the law school should serve all of them, and has a duty to train lawyers and advocates who will do the same.

The *North Carolina Civil Rights Law Review* is our humble, hopeful response. We hope this journal will contribute to a continued, vigorous, creative wrestling with the law in order to make it a more perfect instrument for justice, liberty, and dignity for the people of this state and this country.

For light and liberty—lux libertas,

THE VOLUME 1 BOARD OF EDITORS